

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 00249 172334Z

64

ACTION TRSE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 SS-15 /033 W

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R 161446Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5878

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP

SUBJ: OFFICIAL TRAVEL BY SECRETARY SIMON

REF: STATE 910#

1. PRES ASAD'S PRIVATE SECRETARY HAS GIVEN US AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO PROPOSED FEB 28 DATE THOUGH HE CAUTIONED THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO CONFIRM PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS SO FAR IN ADVANCE.

2. FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, SUGGEST SECRETARY SIMON PLAN ARRIVE DAMASCUS NO LATER THAN NOON FEB 28 FOR MINIMUM SIX HOUR VISIT. THIS WOULD PERMIT CALL ON DEPUTY PRIMIN FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HAIDAR AND ALLOW SYRIANS TO OFFER HOSPITALITY BY GIVING LUNCHEON IN SECRETARY'S HONOR. SECRETARY WOULD LEAVE FOR AIRPORT DIRECTLY FROM AFTERNOON CALL ON PRESIDENT ASAD. BRIEF MEETING WITH FINANCE MINISTER SHARIF MAY ALSO BE ON SCHEDULE. DAMASCUS TIME IS GMT PLUS TWO.

3. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE WILL BE AT DISPOSITION OF PARTY DURING DAMASCUS STOPOVER, AND SIGHTSEEING OR SHOPPING TRIPS WILL BE ARRANGED

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AS TIME PERMITS. SUBSTANTIVE BRIEFINGS CAN BE

SCHEDULED IF DESIRED.

4. EMBASSY WILL NEED TO KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
WHETHER SECRETARY'S AIRCRAFT WILL REQUIRE REFUELING
IN DAMASCUS, WHICH IS EXPERIENCING ACUTE AVIATION FUEL
SHORTAGE. IF SO, WE WILL NEED TO KNOW HOW MUCH AND
BE PROVIDED FISCAL CITATION. SYRIAN GASOLINE MONOPOLY
REQUIRES IMMEDIATE PAYMENT; IT DOES NOT ACCEPT CREDIT
OR CHARGE CARDS. STRONGLY RECOMMEND AGAINST RELYING
ON REFUELING IN DAMASCUS IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.
MURPHY

NOTE BY OCT: #REFTEL APPARENTLY INCORRECT.

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